ABSTRACT
        This paper is an attempt to pose some of the issues
of organizational policy facing the university and its supporting
agencies as it attempts to meet the problems of contemporary society,
particularly as these problems focus on educational research and
research training and demand interdisciplinarity in the process of
their solution. Any definition of interdisciplinarity leads to a
transdisciplinary model that necessitates an integration of some
structure of goals with a system for integrating participating
disciplines. If any such transdisciplinary innovation within the
university is to be successful, it necessitates certain operational
assumptions that include philosophical and budgetary commitment at
the highest level of university administration. Four organizational
patterns are often employed in the establishment of
interdisciplinarity at the university, one of which is the institute
or center. The institute is seen as the most creative organizational
structure for the innovative development of transdisciplinarity in
the university. (HS)

ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY ISSUES AFFECTING
INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND
RESEARCH TRAINING

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> The American colleges and universities, in their
> development from simple institutions to complex
> organizations, not only replaced the old-time
> professor with the academician, that trained
> specialist who knew the rights and privileges
> and responsibilities of a profession and who in
> so many of his experiences was indistinguishable
> from other organization men, but the colleges and
> universitites also required a new kind of executive
> officer, new methods of financing, new areas of
> administration. Growth fed upon growth, and the
> answer to the problems of growth--unless it was
> to be chaos--was organization.

...and organization has continued to feed upon organization,

so that the answer to the resulting problems of lack of

flexibility and social sensitivity--unless it is to be

irrelevance--is increased interaction among the disciplines.

The challenge before the humanistic sciences has never

been greater than it is at the present time. As our technology

outstrips our slowly developing knowledge of ourselves, the

magnitude of human difficulties within our own culture and

throughout the world continues to increase. An acceleration

in the development of social knowledge, particularly that

relating to education, is imperative. Further, this research

effort must have immediate social relevance. The time is

past when human science can tolerate a strong molecular bias

in its approaches to the study of man. This is not to minimize

the importance of this type of basic research, but the

Zeitgeist has shifted to the complementary synthesis of

knowledge sometimes referred to as the "ecological" approach.

1 Rudolph, Frederick, The American College and University
A History, Random House, 1962, page 417

Accelerated technical change has brought about an
ever widening interpretation of what constitutes ed ational
research. Behavior relevant to contemporary education
involves a complex system of concepts identified with
many disciplines. The result has been the significant
and important overlapping of education with other areas
of human science. If educational research is to gain
leverage on contemporary social problems, therefore, it
will need to take on an increasingly interdisciplinary
bias.

Conceptualizing interdisciplinary research, however,
is not enough. Critical policy and attitudinal changes
must occur within higher education before any model for
interdisciplinary research or training will have a chance
to take root. The emphasis has tended to be on what
Jantsch (1970) calls the tactical and strategic questions
rather than on the role and organization of education and
the university as an institution of contemporary society.

The current movement to develop models for research
implementation and research training that involve multiple
disciplines is regarded by many educators as crucial to
the success of contemporary education research. As Randolph
implies, however, the American university has developed
established organization patterns that are extremely
difficult to change. Considerable effort is needed in
establishing a policy for change in the fabric of research

organization and research training in higher education.
In so doing the question of how we expedite interdisciplinary
study from an organizational as well as a conceptual point
of view must be dealt with.

THE CONCEPT OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY

If a group of educators were asked to list the cliches
they felt most often used in discussions of educational
research, it is probable that "interdisciplinary" or
"interdisciplinary research" would be on the list of many.
Indeed "interdisciplinary" is a term nearly everyone uses,
few understand and fewer still have first-hand knowledge
about. As White (1972) recently pointed out, there is no
generally accepted definition of interdisciplinary or multi-
disciplinary research in present research circles. A pattern
emerges, however, when one reviews various positions with
regard to the concept.

Blackwell (1955) defined a continuum of research
undertakings involving six alternatives based upon three
dimensions. The dimensions included the number of people
involved (X), the degree of interaction among researchers (Y)
and the number of disciplines (Z). A description of the
combinations, leaving out the impossible alternatives,
results in a continuum of increasing interdisciplinarity
ranging from the lone researcher working in one discipline
to the team of researchers from multiple disciplines working

in interaction. A complete description of this model is
provided in Appendix A.

White, on the other hand, describes four types of
interdisciplinary research based primarily upon different
levels of activity and degrees of interaction. He describes
his views as follows:

> We can distinguish at least four types of
> activity which do cross the traditional boundaries.
> There is the "renaissance man" type of research
> which resides in individuals who, acting independently,
> manage with great illumination and insight to inte-
> grate the experience and concepts of several fields.
> We are favored with only a few such gifted people....

> Much more common is the "umbrella" type of
> research. Two or more individuals from different
> fields gather together under the protection of a
> symposium, an edited volume, or a grant. The results
> of independent work bearing on a common topic are
> presented with little or no intellectual teamwork.
> This can describe aspects of many problems but
> rarely leads to problem-solving.

> More complicated is the "federated" type of
> research. Two or more individuals join together to
> work toward an agreed goal with understanding as
> to the contribution which each will make but
> reserving to each the responsibility for conduct
> of the research and the character and quality of
> findings. This lends itself to the solution of
> less complex problems, and can deal with more diffi-
> cult topics given sufficient time and patience.

> The type of research which directs itself
> immediately to problem-solving might be called
> "managed" research.... From the outset there is an
> explicitly stated goal and an agreement that all
> participating in the analysis or synthesis will
> direct their activities to stated parts of the
> investigation.[2]

The use of systems science has, perhaps more than any
other process dimension, allowed for quantum leaps in the

2 Response by Gilbert F. White to presentation of the Iben
Award in the Proceedings of the Eighth American Water
Resources Conference, 1972, page 1699.

development of interdisciplinary approaches to social issues.
In this regard the model proposed by Jantsch (1970) intro-
duces a fourth level of disciplinary integration which he
terms "transdisciplinary". For Jantsch the critical
dimension delineating levels of interdisciplinary effort
is the degree and level of synthesis of a system of concepts
from multiple disciplines as well as the degree of coordi-
nation of acceptable goal structures inherent in each.
Transdisciplinarity is a most important addition to the
continuum of cross disciplinary effort as it necessitates
organizational commitment and innovation, including the
delineation of specific programmatic or system goals.

> The ultimate degree of coordination in the
> education/innovation system, finally, which is called
> transdisciplinarity ... would not only depend on a
> common axiomatics--derived from coordination
> toward an "overall system goal"--but also on the
> mutual enhancement of epistemologies in certain
> areas, what Ozbekhan (1970a) calls "synepistemic"
> cooperation. With transdisciplinarity, the whole
> education/innovation system would be coordinated
> as a multilevel multigoal system, embracing a
> multitude of coordinated interdisciplinary two-
> level systems. Transdisciplinary concepts and
> principles over the whole system change signifi-
> cantly with changes in the "overall system goals,"
> .... For example, the adoption of a notion of
> "progress" at this (the) top level would imply a
> totally different education/innovation system from
> one for which "ecological balance", or a notion of
> cyclical development, are adopted. We arrive here at
> the same crossroads as in all attempts to view whole
> systems and aim at their improvement: we lack a deeper
> understanding of purpose, and thus an unambiguous
> direction for our organizational efforts. Neverthe-
> less, we cannot hope to act with a true purpose--
> in other words, to manage the multilevel multigoal
> education/innovation system in a meaningful way--
> if we do not search for and bring into play values

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and norms, a policy for mankind, to guide education
and innovation. This task is, on the one hand, an
aspect of policy formation and institutional renewal
--and thus part of the domain of policy sciences
(Jantsch, 1970)--and on the other hand its very
motor, if education and innovation are supposed to
be geared to the self-renewal of society.[3]

From these conceptualizations of disciplinary inter-
action the following definitions are drafted for purposes
of discussion:

disciplinary research -- research by one or more
individuals involving a single discipline

multidisciplinary research -- group research whereby
individuals from different disciplines work together on
a common problem out with limited interaction

interdisciplinary research -- group research whereby
individuals from different disciplines work as a team, with
continual intellectual interaction and conceptual synthesis

transdisciplinary research -- group research whereby
individuals from different disciplines work as a team
within a mutually accepted systems organization with an
overall set of systems goals.

My comments will draw further from Jantsch's paper as
his remarks focus on critical policy concerns. Models of
interdisciplinary effort are important, but they will fade

3 Jantsch, Erich, "Inter- and Transdisciplinary University:
A Systems Approach to Education and Innovation", Policy
Sciences, American Elsevier Publishing Company, Inc., 1970

quickly unless efforts are made to change the organizational
structure that provides the basis for their functioning.
These policy dimensions of organizational change form the
proverbial "horse" that must precede the "cart" of model
implementation if the critically needed integrated approach
to educational problems is to be achieved.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS AND ISSUES

Unique policy, organizational and operational assumptions
are necessary if any model of interdisciplinary or transdisci-
plinary research is to succeed within a given university
community.

Commitment to Transdisciplinarity

The ability to establish an interdisciplinary research
program or training effort is not enough. Commitment to
these efforts at the top levels of academic administration is
an even more basic necessity for the success of interdisci-
plinary programs. Faculty support will often be guarded
initially, but if a commitment to the policy of organizational
innovation is prevalent within the administration, models of
interdisciplinary change will have an opportunity to prove
themselves. Without such commitment, however, the traditional
disciplinary biases in conjunction with the power concerns
of existing departmental structures will overcome any longi-
tudinal movement toward interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary
research or research training.

Those who cry for "accountability" on the part of

higher education today give as one of their reasons the
overlapping pragmatism that has pervaded postsecondary
academics. The "foot in the door" approach has been
employed too many times with too little concern for administrative commitment to the organizational concepts of
innovation and change demanded by these experimental programs.
Without longitudinal administrative commitment to the
philosophical concepts of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary organization within the university the probability
is very high that any efforts at such change will fail.
Federal policy that encourages the university into a
position of commitment toward the redefinition of goals and
innovative transdisciplinary restructuring, <u>without interfering
in that process</u>, is needed. As Jantsch points out

> ...the systemic multilevel coordination of educational
> structures beyond the teleological interdisciplinarity
> (mainly on the scientific-technical side of the system)
> and some limited experiments in normative interdisciplinarity has hardly been considered so far in the
> discussions centering around university reform--
> perhaps because a clear view of the (a) new purpose of
> the university is still lacking.[4]

Institutional Openness to Change

Certainly many institutions of higher education are not
now and will not in the foreseeable future be interested in
or ready for interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approaches
to academics. A climate of openness to goal redefinition and
concomitant organizational innovation does exist, however,
in many institutions involved in educational research and

4 Jantsch, 1970, Ibid. 3

research training. The existence of such a climate is a
further assumption, necessary as a supplement to adminis-
trative commitment, if the grafting of an innovative model
of interdisciplinary research training is to "take" at a
given institution.

Such openness should not be inappropriately interpreted
as being absent because of the existence of faculty negativism.
Climate as used here is an attitudinal phenomenon based upon
an underlying philosophy of education. Faculty negativism
toward models of interdisciplinary study is often the result
of professional and personal pragmatism. Certainly interdis-
ciplinary research has a credibility gap with many of its
most logical supporters (i.e. innovative faculty dedicated
to the philosophical essentials of transdisciplinarity).
The reasons for this in many cases can be traced to attempts
at implementing such efforts in the past that have failed
for lack of critical administrative support and organizational
soundness. These failures have left committed faculty in
inappropriate and awkward positions with regard to their
disciplinary departments to whom they were dependent for
academic and fiscal well-being. The resultant hesitancy to
professionally commit to such efforts again is obvious and
one of the most important arguments for a policy of organi-
zational as well as conceptual soundness as a basis for
initial federal support to interdisciplinary innovation.

Sensitivity to Social Process and Intellectual Reality

> Of a good leader, who talks little
> When his work is done, his task fulfilled,
> They will all say, "We did this ourselves."
>
> --Lao-tse

Administration cannot dictate the structure of inter-disciplinary teamwork any more than it can dictate the direction of intellectual creativity. The former is as much a matter of professional freedom as is the latter. This is not to say, however, that the interdisciplinary organizational attitude should be entirely "laissez faire". Interdisciplinary teamwork is, like so much of human cooperation, a fragile thing at best, and a critical assumption of any organization that would portend to facilitate such efforts is its sensitivity to the need for creative social process. Such social orchestration is an art and a function of many factors, not the least of which is the personality(s) and social skills of those in positions of interdisciplinary leadership.

Flexibility

In a recent conversation with the administrator of an interdisciplinary research center, the discussion turned to the dimension of organization which he felt was most important to the success of his program. Without hesitation he said "a dedication to flexibility". By definition trans-disciplinarity demands a state of continuous change. If the changing societal goals inherent in the concepts of trans-

disciplinarity are to be met, organizations facilitating them must be extremely dynamic, and the attitudes of the professionals involved must reflect r   ˜   ,?e of this lack of organizational stability.

Certainly this does not reflect the traditional nature of university structure, and maintaining such a state of continuous flexibility is difficult. No assumption is more critical, however, than that of longitudinal "non-structure" in organizations committed to facilitating interdisciplinary research -- indeed they must be dedicated to instability.

Pragmatic Sensitivity to Traditional Organizational Patterns

If the neophytic interdisciplinary organization is to be successful within the university, its leadership should be sensitive to the pragmatic need for complementary rather than competitive relationships with traditional departments. This is not to say that this will always be possible or that it will ever be easy. Most interdisciplinary units are atypical, and as Dressel (1972) points out, "atypical organizations are not easily geared into larger systems based on more traditional patterns". Creativity in management and organization is called for, however, and can be achieved if such interactive, complementary structuring is an adminis-trative priority. The testing of organizational models against a criterion of such effectiveness would seem to be a high priority also for federally sponsored research into educational organization.

Communication

One further critical issue in the organization of training models designed to prepare researchers from varied disciplines to function in an integrated arena of educational research is communication. Semantic difficulties, educators' prediliction toward the over-use of jargon, and the more complex problem of differences in levels of abstraction and quantification form an iceberg on which many interdisciplinary efforts have foundered. Blackwell (1955) projects several clear sociological preventive measures to overcome these problems, including the attention to group process in staff seminars, providing time for the development of common understanding and the detailing of appropriate common axiomatics and glossaries.

In addition to these bases for effective communication an overall framework for the integrated approach to the problem under study is needed. This framework has most often been provided by aspects of systems science.

Careful study of what science means when disciplinary boundaries are removed is another important connector in the interdisciplinary communications matrix. The work of Churchmen (1971) and Singer (1969) are highly relevant here, but these points are eloquently put forth by Ian Mitroff and his colleagues and need no further amplification here.

Of most importance, however, are the attitudes and

interpersonal reactions of the professional members of the
interdisciplinary team. The flow of ideas, opinions and
reactions must be free and open. Professional egos, hidden
agendas, personal insecurities and inappropriate demands
for special status as a function of rank or special experience
have been shown to reduce or eliminate such open communication.
(Kolka, 1972) If this occurs, the potential for the inte-
gration of individual inputs or interdisciplinarity disappears.

APPROACHES TO ORGANIZATION

What are the present organi: tional models for inter-
disciplinary research and how far have they gone toward a
transdisciplinary system? Clearly four types of interdisci-
plinary organization exist. The new colleges organized
around contemporary social concerns no doubt go the farthest
toward integrating traditional disciplines. Good examples
of this approach would be the Green Bay campus of the
University of Wisconsin and the University of California at
Santa Cruz. At Green Bay the colleges have been organized
around the socially relevant foci of environmental science,
human biology, community sciences and creative communications.

These university structures are on the cutting edge
of contemporary education. Interdisciplinary efforts are
the primary not the peripheral emphasis of the institution.
Organizations like these offer the greatest potential at the
present time for transdisciplinary research and research
training. Higher education is entering a period of

retrenchment, however, and the potential for establishing extensive numbers of new university communities like Green Bay or Santa Cruz in the immediate future would not appear to be great.

A second organizational format is the program or project organized as a part of one of the line organizational units (college or department) of the university. Here the interdisciplinary effort has the umbrella protection of the parent unit but also reaps the difficulty of limited autonomy and visibility. The long term impact of such organizations on the overall organization or interdisciplinary approach of the university is usually quite limited.

A third organizational approach to interdisciplinary study is the establishment of a line unit within the traditional university structure, that is developed to meet a particular interdisciplinary concern. Although the organization is traditional, disciplinary departments are usually absent. The organization is mainline, however, in that it is established to fit the existing fiscal and organizational fabric of the university. The faculty of such units often have joint appointments with more traditional academic units to maintain a more "basic" professional involvement and identity. Potential mobility and the concern for the long term stability of the more specialized units are most often the basis for such action.

A more important point, however, is that such interdis-

ciplinary organizational units are generally viewed by
faculty and administrators alike as supplements or appendages
to the "basic" structure of the university--the more tradi-
tional colleges and departments. At best there is partial
support for their legitimacy and draw on the university's
limited resources. Seldom is there anywhere near a
university-wide commitment to the goals of the special
college or department. At the same time, however, they do
have a legitimate draw on the university budget and provide
a relatively stable longitudinal organization.

The disadvantage of the traditional unit acting as a
base for transdisciplinarity is, in fact, its organizational
legitimacy. As a competitive member of the "budget club",
it is difficult for such organizations to provide organiza-
tional counterpoints or to act as agencies for disciplinary
integration.

The institute or center is perhaps the most prevalent
university-based organization for interdisciplinary research
and research training. This structure is somewhat similar
to the special department or college but has the added
flexibility of not being burdened with the traditional
structure and/or organization. Most often responsible to
a college dean and as often as not involved in instruction
as well as research and/or service, the institute is generally
not seen in the same light as a department. Its organization
is extremely flexible, and it therefore meets the dynamic
organizational demands of transdisciplinarity. It is expected

by definition to be atypical (for some purpose) and is
generally accepted by faculty and administration alike as
the most prevalent counter structure to the traditional
disciplinary fabric of the university. Unfortunately,
as indicated above, it also does not in most cases provide
its administrator the luxury of line budgetary security.

It is interesting to note that of sixty-two scientific
advances judged to be the most significant achievements
made in social science between 1900 and 1965 twenty-seven
were institute projects. (Deutsch, Platt and Stenghaas,
1971) At the same time the institute has come under
continual attack as a proliferating counter agent within
the university. It is seen as being out of the university
main stream, often the result of inappropriate faculty
entrepreneurship and generally "creating more problems
than it solves". (Dressel, Johnson and Marcus, 1969)

Dressel and his colleagues do qualify their position,
however, by indicating that the institution has proliferated,

> in great part, because of the fallibility of
> traditional academic departments whose instructional
> and research activities are tied tightly to the
> disciplines which justify their existence. Academic
> departments typically have neither the resources
> nor the interest to attack problems transcending
> their discipline; their faculty members are uncom-
> fortable when asked to operate outside the theoretical
> constructs with which they are most familiar, and
> the rigidity of departmental compartments provides
> no easy way to bring together faculty members and
> resources from several disciplines. Thus, when
> funds become available in problem areas not previously
> established as being of university concern--or when
> the university is prodded into new concerns--the
> institute provides a natural vehicle for assembling
> staff, attracting more funds, indicating institu-

tional commitment, and determining responsibility
and accountability of resources.[5]

Stanley Ikenberry and Renee Friedman have recently
written an extensive review and evaluation of the university
institute that supports Dressel's qualifications. They
comment that

> ... Institutes tend to be organized around tasks
> that, in contrast to those of academic departments,
> may involve more than one discipline. This essential
> difference, although elementary, is at the root
> of the added flexibility provided by their organi-
> zational form. Few indications suggest that
> institutes will replace academic departments in
> the foreseeable future as the principal university
> organizational mode. Neither, however, is there
> evidence that demands for a task-oriented or mission-
> oriented posture on the part of universities will
> lessen. Thus, institutes are likely to continue to
> add a useful dimension to the overall organizational
> configuration. The issue is how institutes and
> centers can become more effective, better serve
> the purposes of the university as well as their
> own, and become more fully integrated in the life
> of the institution than they now are.[6]

The question Ikenberry and Friedman raise brings us
back to Jantsch's (1970) conceptualization of transdisci-
plinarity. As we have discussed, he sees this as an
integrated, systems oriented approach coupled with an inte-
grated and dynamic goals system that brings the university
more in sympathy with the contemporary needs of society.
The author conceives the institute as the medium, the
counterpoint within the traditional university organization

5 Dressel, Paul L., Johnson, F. Craig, and Marcus, Philip M.,
"The Proliferating Institutes", Change in Higher Education,
July-August 1969, page 21

6 Ikenberry, Stanley O. and Friedman, Renee C., Beyond
Academic Departments, Jossey-Bass Inc., 1972, page 4

for moving toward increasing transdisciplinarity.

If disciplines are to _participate_ in the transdisci-
plinary structure, then they can do so only through
commitment. To be meaningful, commitment should have
budgetary as well as philosophical meaning. Just as
individual professionals commit to interdisciplinary efforts
through a joint effort of all members, numbers of departments
can band together through a neutral organization to provide
interdisciplinary leverage in a given area. Organizationally
this requires a facilitating, flexible agency to act as an
organizational "referee". Such a unit cannot be a budgetary
competitor in the line structure and maintain its credibility
as a neutral. This role can be filled well by the institute
if it is organized with this in mind. The Institute for
Family and Child Study at Michigan State University is such
a unit. (Boger, 1970)

All of this assumes again that the university is to a
degree Baconian in its orientation. It also assumes, however,
that the functional and critical nature of disciplinary
structure must be protected. What is called for are comple-
mentary structures to expedite transdisciplinarity as a
supplement to disciplinary functioning.

SUMMARY

This paper has been an attempt to pose some of the
issues of organizational policy facing the university and
its supporting agencies as it attempts to meet the problems
of contemporary society, particularly as these problems
focus upon educational research and research training and
demand interdisciplinarity in the process of their solution.
Several points in this discussion seem focal, and for
purposes of clarity they are summarized as follows:

1) Any definition of interdisciplinarity leads to a
model that necessitates an integration of some structure of
goals with a system for integrating participating disciplines.
Erich Jantsch (1970) formulated a model for such an inter-
disciplinary effort on the part of the university which he
defines as the development of transdisciplinarity.

2) If any such transdisciplinary innovation within the
university is to be successful, it necessitates certain
operational assumptions which include philosophical and
budgetary commitment at the highest level of university
administration; a university climate which is open to change;
a sensitivity to the social process demands of interdisci-
plinary efforts by those who would lead them; a dedication
to flexibility and a state of continual instability on the
part of the agency facilitating the university's interdisci-
plinary thrust; a well developed definitional, attitudinal

and procedural structure for expediting interdisciplinary
communication; and most of all a pragmatic sensitivity to
the need for creative, pragmatic approaches to interdisci-
plinary innovation that complement rather than compete with
important traditional organizational structure at the
university.

3) Four organizational patterns are often employed in
the establishment of interdisciplinarity at the university.
They include a) the transdisciplinary university, b) the
traditional line unit (college and/or department) of the
university. c) a sub-program within such a unit and d) the
institute or center.

4) The institute is seen as the most creative organiza-
tional structure for the innovative development of trans-
disciplinarity in the university because its atypical format
allows it to flexibly meet the critical assumptions
previously noted, and its position outside the budgetary
line structure of the university allows it to assume the
neutral role of transdisciplinary expediter for participating
disciplinary units.

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APPENDIX A

Continuum of Types of Research Undertakings

$X_1Y_1Z_1$	$X_1Y_1Z_n$	$X_nY_1Z_1$	$X_nY_nZ_1$	$X_nY_1Z_n$	$X_nY_nZ_n$
Lone researcher working in one discipline	Lone researcher using more than one discipline	Two or more researchers working separately in same discipline	Two or more researchers working as a team in same discipline	Two or more researchers working separately in different disciplines	Multidisciplinary team research

Let X represent the number of researchers (X_1 = one person; X_n = more than one person). Let Y represent the kind of action in the research process (Y_1 = separate action; Y_n = varying degrees of collective action). And let Z represent the number of disciplines (Z_1 = one discipline; Z_n = more than one discipline). It is obvious that these dimensions may be arranged in eight possible combinations. Two of these combinations would require one person in collective action which is impossible. The remaining six combinations of these dimensions may be placed on a descriptive continuum of research as illustrated in the accompanying chart.

Blackwell, Gordon W., "Multidisciplinary Team Research", Social Forces, Vol. 33 (May, 1955) pp 367-368